Extremists of 'New Left' Scored as Campus Peril

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By Susan Filson
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Lewis F. Powell Jr., past president of the American Bar Association, told a group of Virginia educators yesterday that the main threat to academic freedom on college campuses today comes from the "new left" rather than the radical right.

Speaking in Arlington at a meeting of the Association of Virginia Colleges, Powell, a member of the State Board of Education, said student groups such as the free Speech Movement at Berkeley are "quite alien to traditional liberal ideals."

"The 'new left' is new primarily because it does not accept American institutions," Powell said. "It is a revolutionary movement."

The position of "new left" student groups on public issues such as the Vietnam war are not his major concern, Powell said. "It is rather the extremism of certain demands and the irresponsibility of methods used."

Many teach-ins on the Vietnam war were responsibly conducted, Powell said, but they were "not a part of the 'new left'." At other teach-ins, he maintained, it was standard practice "to submerge Administration spokesman under waves of booing, hissing and cat-calling."

"Extremist audiences, of right or left, will rarely permit a fair presentation of both sides of any issue."

He said that while the majority of students and professors in "new left" movements are "neither communist in fact nor in basic sympathy," the communists wish to "penetrate and lead the movement."

Powell urged the representatives from more than 45 Virginia colleges and universities to "have the courage to draw the line between liberty and license." He said he hoped that "we in Virginia would not be as supine and prone to appeasement" as officials at the University of California at Berkeley.